

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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TO: Dianna Webster, Board President
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FROM: Cathy Murphy, Quality Improvement Specialist

RE: FY05 Annual Quality Assurance Review

DATE: July 21, 2005

The annual on-site review portion of the quality assurance process was conducted on June 9 and 10, 2005. References and guidelines for this review are found in the Developmental Disabilities Program handbook titled "Quality Assurance Process for Adult and Group Home Services" dated July 11, 2003.

Big Sandy Activities provides day/work, group home, and supported living services to adults with developmental disabilities. At this time Big Sandy Activities does not have any Community Supports consumers. This report contains findings, comments, and recommendations noted during the on-site review and observations over the past year. These are also noted on Quality Assurance Observation Sheets, which are attached to this report.

Administrative

Big Sandy Activities conducts two agency-wide staff meetings annually. One of these meetings is designed to discuss and develop the agency's annual goals and objectives. The 2005 goals and objectives sheet for Big Sandy Activities is attached to this report. A second staff meeting is dedicated to training. This last year the staff received training on death/dying issues. This was a very pertinent topic as a long-term staff member and a consumer passed away, as well as a number of consumers who are aging and medically fragile. Both of the group homes and the Day Center also have regularly scheduled staff meetings to discuss pertinent issues.

Quality Meetings are held weekly. This group, which also acts as the Safety Committee, reviews Incident Reports, health and safety issues, and programmatic issues or events.

Big Sandy Activities has comprehensive policies and procedures. Employees are given copies of the Personnel Policies and Procedures and Safety Manuals at Orientation and annually thereafter. BSA has also developed a policy and procedures to be in compliance with the new Incident Management Policy and DDP Incident Management System which became effective on April 15, 2005. BSA has not submitted Trend Analysis reports, nor do they have a system in place to track incidents (QAOS #1). They have subscribed to Therap services which, when implemented, is supposed to provide incident and trend analysis information in compliance with the DDP requirements.

Group home licensing reviews were completed in August 2004. In October 2002 The Council awarded Big Sandy Activities a three-year "Accreditation with Distinction". Big Sandy Activities has maintained accreditation since 1987. They have chosen not to reapply for accreditation when their current certificate expires.

Again this year there were problems with the submission of the Annual Expenditure Report (QAOS #2). It is required that this report be submitted within ninety (90) days of the end of each fiscal year and accurately detail actual expenditures incurred of Medicaid waiver funded consumers.

Residential

Big Sandy Activities operates two community group homes. One residence is the home of six women, five of whom have been identified as "intensive." The second group home provides intensive services for seven men and one woman who is the sibling of one of the residents. BSA also provides supported living services to 4 men who have either on-site or on-call overnight supervision.

For the purpose of this review both group homes were visited, as well as, the home of two supported living consumers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Big Sandy Activities provides services to a number of individuals with significant health or medical issues. BSA is to be commended for their thorough monitoring of health conditions of their consumers (QAOS #3). A "Residential Daily Record" is completed each day for every group home resident. In addition to documenting completion of personal hygiene tasks and body functions staff document information such as emotional status, health, and appetite of consumers. A registered nurse is employed by Big Sandy Activities. In addition to prompt attention and comprehensive follow-up of

any health/medical situations, the RN also completes those everyday tasks that require a health care professional (i.e. tube feeding, insulin injections).

The medication logs were reviewed at both group homes. The med log at the Women's home was up to date. At the Co-ed home, however, the log was missing some check-offs and/or staff initials (QAOS #4). The errors involved five separate consumers and occurred during weekday evening shifts. This is not common as during on-site visits over the past year the med log has been complete and accurate, however staff are encouraged to be more diligent in the process of assisting consumers with their medications. A supported living consumer who is independent in administering his medications was recently prescribed a new medication. Staff completed the required 30 consecutive days of documentation of continued independence. Protocols exist for bathing and PRN medications.

The structures and furnishings of the community group homes are in good repair. Both are very clean, organized, and offer a very homey atmosphere for the individuals residing there (QAOS #10). There are adequate cleaning products and other supplies and all are properly stored and secured. Staff have been observed completing cleaning tasks in a very thorough manner.

Emergency evacuations are conducted and documented monthly at both residents. Times of drills varied between 8a.m. to 8p.m. The Quality Enhancement Coordinator stated that night staff conduct a mock evacuation drill with other staff members enacting the roles of the consumers. These drills are conducted annually at a group home staff meeting, however up until now, they have not been documented on the evacuation drill report.

The water temperature was tested at both homes. Several of the residents at the co-ed home had just completed baths when the temperatures were taken. They ranged from 92-113 degrees. The water temperature in both bathrooms of the women's home was 125 degrees. This was over the acceptable temperature threshold (QAOS #5) and staff were informed immediately, as was the Quality Enhancement Coordinator so the temperature could be adjusted to within acceptable limits.

Supported living staff assist consumers as needed with meal preparation, cleaning, and other activities of daily living. Consumers live in environments that are safe, healthy, and respectful of individual preferences (QAOS #11). Three supported living consumers were interviewed and all stated they are satisfied with staff and the services they receive.

SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

The consumers of Big Sandy Activities enjoy Individual Plan (IP) meetings (QAOS #6) that are very person-centered and presented in a professional manner with the Quality Enhancement Coordinator taking the lead role in facilitating the meeting. Individuals are encouraged to be actively involved, not only in the actual meeting, but also in the planning and preparation phases. Many meetings are conducted in the individual's

home with special lunch or snacks prepared. In addition to the individual, family members, case manager, and program staff, there are often special friends or advocates who are invited and attend IP meetings.

An array of assessment tools is utilized to identify strengths, goals, needs, and wishes of individuals. Assessment summaries are prepared beforehand. The Individual Plans address individual preferences with short-term objectives being measurable and matching long-range goals.

One of the areas in which BSA could improve is by increasing the number of “training” or skill acquisition objectives (QAOS #12). Though there are several consumers who are elderly or have significant health or physical care needs, many would benefit from a more concentrated effort in the habilitation arena. This has been a topic of discussion several times over the past year and was also noted in the previous quality assurance annual review. Some suggestions would be to look at more discrete skills on assessments, a single step of a task that would increase the level of independence a person has, or skills that enable people to better express their wants, needs, or choices. Even those with significant physical limitations may be able to activate adaptive switches to do things like turn on music, or even to request attention. The bottom line is that in addition to assuring the health and safety of our consumers, it is also our responsibility to assist them to identify and learn skills that will enhance their independence and quality of life. This may require that IP teams really dissect skills so they are able to be more creative in developing skill acquisition objectives.

In the residential services area there is just one training objective that consisted of staff reminding the consumer to “eat like a lady” and talk in a voice loud enough to be heard. As is noted later in the Day Services section of this report, BSA has been encouraged to modify this objective as currently it identifies two behaviors, and though written as a reinforcement program is actually being administered in an aversive manner as observed in both the work and home environments.

A third area that Big Sandy Activities could improve in is the timely submission of Quarterly Reports (QAOS #7). The case manager indicates that though some Quarterly Reports do come in on time the last reports for each quarter were received on 7/11/04 (prior to due date), 11/10/04 (late), 1/25/05 (late), and 5/5/05 (late). Quarterlies are due to the case manager by the fifteenth (15th) of the month following the end of the quarter. These reports should also be submitted to the Quality Improvement Specialist in the same timeframe. The information submitted on the Quarterly Report is always complete and accurate.

Leisure and recreational activities are monitored on the Residential Daily Record. The Community Integration Checklist also documents activities for each person on a weekly basis. The staff and administration of Big Sandy Activities do a fine job of offering a wide variety of group and individual activities for folks to participate in (see QAOS #8). People have ample opportunities to participate in social, religious, and other community integration functions and to visit neighboring communities as well. Some of the consumers initiate their own social and recreational activities while others are more

dependent on staff. A younger female consumer was assisted by staff in attending a high school prom in a nearby town. The Tumbleweed Gallery, owned and operated by BSA also affords those interested a small coffeehouse in which to visit with other community members, or to just sit and watch the traffic go by.

There are currently no rights restrictions in place for any consumers. BSA assists consumers in understanding their rights by discussing and role-playing various situations that involve individual rights.

STAFFING

Staff receive comprehensive orientation and training with CBT sections 1-6, safety and medical issues, job description review, and direct care components presented in new staff orientation. Sections 7-9 of CBT must be completed by employees within 6 months of hire, and sections 10-16 are completed within 1 year of those hired in a management position.

Annual training includes CPR (First Aid every 3 years), body mechanics, wheelchair safety, van safety, blood borne pathogens, fire drills, general safety information, behavior modification, emotionally responsible care giving/abuse prevention, consumer rights, and documentation. Additionally, each year BSA provides employees with copies of their Personnel Policies Handbook and Safety Manual. The Quality Enhancement Coordinator is currently developing a video library of training materials to make training information more easily accessible for staff.

At the time of the on-site review portion of the Annual Quality Assurance Review there was one staff who had been hired within the previous 12 months. A records review indicated her first shift was on 3/16/05, the same day her background check was returned. BSA has begun utilizing Intellicorp, which completes extensive national background checks.

Staff-to-consumer ratios have been checked throughout the year via either visits (some announced and some unexpected), and phone calls. BSA has maintained appropriate staffing ratios at both group homes and at the day center.

Staff surveys were completed with one day staff, one supported living staff, and 3 group home staff, including the residential manager at the co-ed home. It is unclear if all staff understand their role as mandatory reporters to APS, as several staff required prompting when answering questions regarding reporting suspected or witnessed abuse, neglect or exploitation (see QAOS #9). Other sections of the survey involving consumer rights, orientation training, supervising medications, Individual Plans, and incident reporting were quite satisfactory. In fact, staff are to be commended for their responses in sections regarding behavior interactions with consumers, and emotionally responsible care giving. All staff consistently responded with very thoughtful and caring responses that not only expressed concern for the health and safety of the consumers, but were also very respectful. It is evident through staff surveys and observing

interactions that Big Sandy Activities places a high priority on emotionally responsive care giving.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

As was noted in the Administrative section of this report Big Sandy Activities has chosen to purchase the services of Therap to assist them in the management of reporting and tracking incidents involving their consumers and/or staff.

BSA did have one incident in the past year which involved notifying APS and law enforcement. This incident involved the theft of some medications from the co-ed group home. Big Sandy Activities conducted drug tests on all the employees and conducted a critical incident investigation. Though APS chose not to investigate the incident BSA did cooperate with law enforcement and the local drug taskforce. No arrests were made in connection with this incident; however there have been no further episodes.

Work/Day/Community Employment

Big Sandy Activities work and day services at their Day Center and also operates the Tumbleweed Gallery, a local art gallery and coffee shop. Both sites were visited as part of the annual quality assurance review.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The medications log book was reviewed as part of the quality assurance review. The log book contains lists of current medications as well as prn medications. Documentation was thorough and up to date in the log book with only med certified staff assisting consumers with their medications. Medications are properly stored. There are ample cleaning and personal supplies that were also properly stored.

Given the significant medical needs of many of the consumers, BSA has a registered nurse on staff. As with the residential services, the nurse is available immediately to respond to any health or medical situations.

The physical site of the day center is clean and well organized. One room is set up with tables and chairs, another is designed for therapy activities, there is also an area to exercise, and a relaxation area. There is adequate open space to facilitate easy movement for those in wheel chairs.

The staff at the day center conduct and document evacuation drills. They also meet for a short time each day to discuss any health or safety, IP and work issues. When needed longer meetings are scheduled.

SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Individual Plans were reviewed as part of the annual quality assurance review. All IPs were appropriately filed and documentation was current for all programs reviewed. As noted in the Residential section of this report, I recommend more skill acquisition or “training” programs be developed for consumers. At the day program there are currently two programs implemented. Currently one program, though written as a support objective to reinforce a person for “eating like a lady” and “talking loud enough to be heard,” was actually observed to be implemented in an aversive manner. Staff was observed telling the individual to “talk loud or you won’t get your treat.” Positive programming strategies were discussed with the staff and with the Quality Enhancement Coordinator who then contacted the Case Manager to discuss objective revisions (QAOS #12). The second skill acquisition objective at the day center is to teach a person to tie a garbage bag so that the contents don’t spill out when the trash is taken outside. According to the data sheet the program is run regularly and the person is making progress.

The Day Center offers opportunities for paid work such as rolling newspapers, emptying garbage, setting table, janitorial work, cleaning of the city park, and city flower pot maintenance. The Center also makes available many activities and crafts as an alternative or when work is not available. The consumers of Big Sandy Activities are active members of the community and staff often assist them in participating in community events. There are also groups from the community that come to BSA regularly with activities for the consumers. Activities are kept track of in a daily activity log and are also reflected in annual IP documents.

The Tumbleweed Gallery is a unique part of the day services of Big Sandy Activities. It houses a studio where one of their consumers spends his day creating works of art for sale in the gallery. The gallery also sells the work of other Montana artists and is staffed by employees of BSA. The gallery also houses a small café and it is not uncommon to find one of the consumers there enjoying the visitors and watching traffic go by.

Currently, no consumers of Big Sandy activities have any rights restrictions in place. Consumers are taught their individual rights through role-playing and other instructional methods.

Emotionally responsible care giving is taught as part of new employee orientation at Big Sandy Activities and is a hallmark of their services. BSA has made an effort to hire individuals with caring personalities. This is evident when observing interactions between staff and consumers.

Consumer surveys are completed prior to each annual Individual Planning meeting. Consumers indicate that their needs are met and they are happy with the services they receive from Big Sandy Activities.

STAFFING

As is mentioned earlier in this report Big Sandy Activities has been successful in hiring people who exhibit desirable care-giving traits. Staff receive adequate orientation and training to be successful in their jobs.

Staff-to-consumer ratios have been checked throughout the year by drop-in visits or phone calls. The ratio has always been at levels in accordance with Appendix I.

Community Supports

Big Sandy Activities is not currently providing any Community Supports services at this time.

Transportation

Big Sandy Activities provides new staff with wheelchair lift and van safety training as part of employee orientation and training. Driver safety courses are offered each year through OPI's Division of Traffic Education. BSA has been able to have several staff participate in this training over the years.

BSA has taken advantage of DOT grants to fund the purchase of vehicles. Vans appear to be in good operational condition and are serviced regularly.

Vehicle usage is documented on a Trip Report which includes driver's name, date, time, origin, destination, odometer readings at beginning and end of trip and the number of passengers.

Conclusion

The consumers of Big Sandy Activities continue to enjoy an excellent quality of life. Services are provided by staff who are dedicated to providing emotionally responsible and quality care. Many of the consumers are medically fragile and have significant personal care needs. BSA staff continue to do an exceptional job of attending to these needs while maintaining a compassionate and caring attitude towards the individuals they are assisting. Staff are also committed to assisting the consumers of BSA to become active and integral members of the community and encourage the development of friendships and relationships outside of paid staff.

An area that BSA could improve it's quality of services includes becoming more creative in the development of instructional or training objectives to facilitate greater independence. The timely submission of quarterly reports, the development of an incident trend analysis report, and the timely and accurate submission of financial

reports, including the Annual Expenditure Report are also needed areas of improvement.

I am confident that Big Sandy Activities will continue to be a first-rate provider of services for individuals with developmental disabilities, particularly for those with significant health and personal care issues. The administration and staff of Big Sandy Activities are dedicated to providing quality care in environments that are very caring and supportive of individual's choices and goals.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Murphy,
Quality Improvement Specialist

Attachments: Big Sandy Activities, Inc. 2005 Goals and Objectives
Quality Assurance Observation Sheets (QAOS) #1-12

CC: Bruci Ann Hall, Region II Manager
John Zeeck, Quality Assurance Specialist
Tim Plaska, Community Services Bureau Chief
Contract File